

Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Eric Toper and I am a concerned citizen from Plainfield.

I am writing you to ask for your support of **Raised Senate Bill 354**, a bill that will create a music therapy license in Connecticut . This bill is important because it will allow Connecticut citizens to more easily access music therapy services, and it will protect the public by ensuring that these services are provided by trained and qualified practitioners.

Please note that my support of licensure for music therapy is dependent on some language changes which have been submitted as written testimony by Jennifer Sokira on behalf of the CT Task Force. These changes ensure that the license is reflective of current board certification requirements in music therapy and is not limiting to the practices of Board Certified Music Therapists currently in CT.

I am the father of a beautiful 8 year old girl named Abigail. She was born with multiple challenges. My daughter is the light of my life. She makes me laugh every day, and now when I come home from work nothing makes me more complete then when I hear her scream DADDY!! You see, Abigail is non-verbal. She uses a talker machine in order to communicate with our family. Although she is "non-verbal", she has always loved the sounds that music creates. One day, we went to the Niantic Children's Museum where we met Courtney Biddle, a music therapist. Immediately, Abby was drawn to her and the music. She was engaged with peers, singing, and very attentive. We got her information that day, and a few months later had it integrated into her PPT through school. Unfortunately, I do not get to see these sessions because of the time and my work. Within a few sessions, mama and dada became mommy and daddy. Last summer, through a grant, we were able to go to sessions once a week in Mystic. I took a day off from work and witnessed one session. My daughter was saying the words to the song, not humming them. Without the sessions with Courtney and her co-workers, I do not believe my daughter would be speaking at all. We see improvement every day with her language, and her demeanor changes as well.

Please help not only our family, but the thousands of other children that could benefit from this. I have seen first hand the differences that this therapy makes.

For these reasons, I ask that you please vote "yes" on **Raised Senate Bill 354!**

Sincerely,

Eric S. Toper